

CREATION

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Manning the lifeboats

In the news recently has been Richard Dawkins, for claiming that many people in the UK could not genuinely be considered Christians because of their ignorance of the Bible - but then shooting himself in the foot by demonstrating his own inability to name correctly even just the full title of his own "bible", Darwin's *Origin of Species*. The subsequent embarrassed silence of the evolutionist camp over the issue is a tacit recognition of the irretrievability of his position.

Since then some folk have taken heart from Dawkins' description of himself at another event as an agnostic, wondering if this signals the beginnings of a change of his beliefs. In fact, Dawkins' comments are much the same as he has always stated of himself, though the Lord alone knows the heart of man.

Should we then be discouraged? No, not at all, for we recall that Paul was implacably opposed to the Gospel right up to the moment of his miraculous conversion on the Damascus road, after which he became the Gospel's strongest advocate and an apostle to the gentiles. Prayer is a powerful weapon for good!

In the meantime it's worth pointing out that even Dawkins' current opposition can actually be used by the Lord in furtherance of the Gospel. Bill Cooper, in his recently published book *The Authenticity of the Book of Genesis* (see below, page 16) puts it like this:

"We are all familiar with the fact that on every good ship there are notices telling you where the lifeboats are, where the life-jackets are kept, and where to go in order to claim your seat in the life-raft should the ship begin to founder. The owners of the ship have obviously gone to a great deal of time, trouble and expense to put up those notices. And it's a good thing, too!

"But imagine you are on a ship which has no lifeboats on board, nor any equipment which might help you stay afloat. Does it make any sense, when the ship begins to sink, for some passenger or other to spend what little time he has left printing out and sticking up posters saying that there are no lifeboats, just in case someone on board might be spending their time hoping that there might be? Of course it doesn't. He'd surely be better occupied either swimming for it, or trying to pump the water out of the ship to keep it afloat just a little longer.



By the grace of God, Jesus has been made our Saviour. Like a lifeboat, he saves us from sinking in the guilt of our sins. Why would anyone want to dissuade us from coming to Him? Image: CSM.

Anything else would be madness and a waste of whatever precious time he has left.

“Richard Dawkins, the famously vociferous atheist, recently put his weight behind a campaign in England to put up posters on public buses saying: “There’s probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life.” – which is all well and good, except that the one person in that campaign who was worried to bits by the mere possibility of there being a God, seems to have been Dawkins himself! He has spent his whole life and thousands of his own money proclaiming his hope that God does not exist. Why?

“In any other circumstance, it might be said that just the thought that God could exist terrifies him – indeed, that it terrifies him so much that he can’t stop shouting about it, even to the open embarrassment of his colleagues. That isn’t science. It isn’t academe. It isn’t even philosophy. It’s despair, pure and simple, and it has nothing to add to the fund of human happiness. What comfort it can be for the passengers on our sinking ship to read that there probably is no lifeboat, and that they must stop worrying and enjoy the few minutes

they have left before they drown, is surely none at all, and making the public feel the urgency of that discomfort must be the greatest service that Richard Dawkins could possibly have rendered the Gospel. Our heartfelt thanks to you, Richard.

“Such pointless and counter-productive activity, of course, isn’t new. But it raises the question of what is so terrible about the knowledge that salvation is free to all and that man can live forever in the Kingdom of God, that a man of such talent should spend his life and his very soul seeking to persuade people away from it? What is so wrong with the notion that God is Truth, that His Word is true, and that He is faithful to all His promises – the very best of Fathers? And why is it such an urgent necessity in the eyes of so many to expunge that knowledge and notion at whatever the cost?

“The fact of the matter is that the immeasurable amount of time, money and energy that has gone into the disparagement of the Bible over the past two thousand years and more, is simply a measure of its inestimable value. No other book in the history of the world has attracted such venom and hate. In times past, whole armies were employed in its confiscation, destruction and burning – often along with its owners. As for times future, we may only guess what will be done. But whatever kind of war will continue to be waged against the Bible (and it is all the same war), we can be assured that it will be pursued with rigour and with all the ferocity and determination that men can muster. The Bible will survive it, of course. It always does. God’s Word is eternal, even as He Himself is eternal. Man, on the other hand, for all his endeavours, is

somewhat less, and it is the end-game of the war that will always defeat him.”

Cuttings & Comments from New Scientist

by Dr David Rosevear

7 January p.30 - A darker shade of dark
If the universe really started with a ‘big bang’ explosion of nothing into everything, one has to ask why all those high energy sub-atomic particles didn’t go on flying further and further apart. What we see, however, are clusters of galaxies of stars. The paradox is solved by proposing that cold dark matter (CDM) was formed at the same time as matter we can see and feel, and its gravitational pull was responsible for the clumping. Every now and then, claims are made that evidence for CDM has been seen.

Of course, if a Creator made the heavens only a few thousand years ago, CDM becomes redundant.

“**Deep underground**, [in the Large Hadron Collider] several experiments have been buzzing with possible sightings of dark matter, the hitherto invisible stuff that is believed to make up around 85 per cent of all matter in the cosmos. Detecting dark matter would be a major triumph. Yet any hopes that the nature of the stuff would be quickly revealed by these first detections have been utterly dashed...

“**We need dark matter**. For starters, it is a form of cosmic glue that binds our galaxy together and provides the necessary gravitational force for galaxies to cluster around one another. If dark matter does not exist, it means that our understanding of gravity on the

largest scales is wrong. This is unthinkable to most astronomers...

“**What’s more**, dark matter is the missing link in our attempts to move beyond the standard model of particle physics. The standard model cannot explain the masses of ordinary particles.. With both astronomy and particle physics needing more particles to be identified to make sense of observations, theorists began calculating what these entities might be. They homed in on the weakly interacting massive particle, or WIMP, a sluggish entity with a mass of ... about 100 times that of a proton.

“**More problems have come courtesy of the Large Hadron Collider at CERN near Geneva, Switzerland**. If our understanding of dark matter is correct, then we should be able to make WIMPs in the LHC’s high energy collisions. So far none have shown up. WIMPs as we know them could soon be impossible.

“**On the face of it**, axions sound promising. However, they are also slow-moving, and so axions are labelled alongside WIMPs as ‘cold’ dark matter. The trouble with cold dark matter of any variety is that we are starting to have reservations about its existence.”

With ever increasing computing power, we now predict clumpy clouds of CDM the size of the solar system, yet these have never been found.

“**Collar** [of the University of Chicago] dubs the current impasse ‘a world of pain’ and reckons that it is likely to get worse before it gets better. Now that we have begun to see something, either astrophysics is wrong, or our whole understanding of dark matter is wrong.”

But don’t expect these theories to be abandoned just yet. Too much money has been invested, and too many careers are

riding on them. They still think that creationism is an abuse of science!

14 January p.3 - In the beginning

Here the editor reminds us that the name 'big bang' theory was coined by Professor Fred Hoyle of Cambridge as a term of ridicule for the notion that everything arrived from nothing.

"The big bang is now part of the furniture of modern cosmology, but Hoyle's unease has not gone away. Many physicists have been fighting a rear-guard action against it for decades, largely because of its theological overtones. If you have an instant of creation, don't you need a creator?"

"Without an escape clause, physicists and philosophers must finally answer a problem that has been nagging at them for the best part of 50 years: how do you get a universe, complete with the laws of physics, out of nothing?"

14 January p.6 - Death of the eternal cosmos

"From the cosmic egg to the infinite multi-verse, every model of the universe has a beginning."

"You call them the worst birthday presents ever. At the meeting of minds convened last week to honour Stephen Hawking's 70th birthday – loftily titled 'State of the Universe' – two bold proposals posed serious threats to our existing understanding of the cosmos. One shows that a problematic object called a naked singularity is a lot more likely to exist than previously assumed. The other suggests that the universe is not eternal, resurrecting the thorny question of how to kick-start the cosmos without the hand of a supernatural creator. 'A point of creation would be a place where science broke down. One

would have to appeal to religion and the hand of God', Hawking told the meeting, at the University of Cambridge, in a pre-recorded speech."

Another theoretical option is a cyclic universe where big bangs conclude with big crunches of collapsed universes in a never-ending cycle.

"Disorder increases with time. So following each cycle, the universe must get more and more disordered. But if there has already been an infinite number of cycles, the universe we inhabit now should be in a state of maximum disorder. Such a universe would be uniformly lukewarm and featureless, and definitely lacking such complicated beings as stars, planets and physicists –nothing like the one we see around us...All the evidence we have says that the universe had a beginning."

21 January p.4 - Classroom battles & p.25

"After decades of fighting to keep creationism out of the classroom, US science education advocates are steeling themselves to face a new foe: climate change sceptics."

Neither education nor science can progress by stifling opposition to the current party line.

On p.25 of this issue, there is an interview with Eugenie Scott.

"Keep climate change denial and creationism out of the classroom, says the education campaigner."

"In the US we have constitutional provisions requiring you not to advocate religion in public schools. So if people try to 'balance' the teaching of evolution with creationism we can say: 'If you do bring that in you will be sued and you will lose.'"

However, educationalists can hardly threaten legal action if students question

the scientific aspects of evolution theory during lessons.

21 January p.35 - The Ascent of life

The late Stephen Jay Gould claimed that **“evolution is not a process of inexorable progress but of contingency. Mutations happen unpredictably. Sexual reproduction combines genes at random. Droughts, ice ages and meteorites strike without warning and kill off fully fit individuals and species.”**

“Gould’s view is the orthodoxy of evolutionary theory. Yet it remains hard to reconcile with the intuitive sense that life has indeed progressed over time.” Evolutionists think that bacteria have progressed to mammals and man.

The 2nd Law of Thermodynamics implies that the ascent of life is extremely unlikely. **More nuanced readings, however, have been used to argue that local increases in complexity are not merely permitted by the law, but required by it, and order can and does emerge spontaneously from chaos.”** Here we see that evolutionists conveniently ignore the condition that complexity-from-chaos needs not only energy but an input of information. An acorn progresses to become an oak tree only because of the genetic programme it contains. Single-celled organisms are only programmed to produce the same single-celled creature.

It is also claimed here that very different species living in similar environments have independently evolved in similar ways. For example: **“Dolphins, bats and several species of cave-dwelling**

bird separately hit on echo-location.” We would argue that this property is far better explained as being the work of a common designer than by convergent evolution. Here it is even suggested that intelligence is a convergent property that always emerges in favourable conditions. These arguments are intended to show that life not only evolves, it progresses.

“Direction and constraint, however, do not imply design and purpose. A developmental view of evolution needs no help from teleology. Such a theory of evolution offers no support for intelligent design. Indeed, it would strike another major blow to it by offering a cogent naturalistic explanation for the emergence of complexity.”

This idea of progressive evolution is as full of holes as a sieve. Furthermore, the only ‘evidence’ for convergent evolution is the observation that some creatures exhibit the same properties. Moreover, neither dolphins, bats nor cave-dwelling birds could function without echo-location. They needed it from the beginning.



An oak tree contains more information than the instruments used to study it - could it really have arisen just by chance? Image: CSM.

21 January p.64 - Feedback

This week Feedback concluded with a piece of black humour:

“Finally, while taken by the idea of a Global Atheist Convention, due to take place from 13 to 15 April, as advertised in our holiday issue (24/31 December 2011, p.7), Paul Griffiths notes that if Christopher Hitchens were to make his advertised appearance ‘it might rather put a dampener on the event.’

We imagine that the militant atheist Hitchens, who died on 15 December, would himself be put out to find himself making an afterlife appearance. Sadly, the unavoidable time-lag between preparation of the advert and the ink drying provides a mundane explanation for the error.”

28 January - p.29 One minute with...

Greg Fiest

“Have psychologists looked into the issue of how objective the scientific process really is?”

“Scientists are human. They’re not perfectly objective and rational, but the scientific method tries to limit that as much as possible by having repeatable, observable empirical methods to minimise the subjective element. The more we understand about the psychology of scientists the more we can mitigate the effect of cognitive bias.”

The problem with evolution theory is that it is based upon the presupposition that God did not create everything a few thousand years ago, and because it was not observed it cannot be empirical science. Nor is it repeatable. It is no more ‘scientif-

ic’ than a belief in creation. Yet the evidence of ‘the things that are made’ point to the work of the Creator (Romans 1:20; Psalm 19:1).

In this interview, psychologist Greg Fiest also says: **“In the US, only 2 per cent of the population is Jewish, yet about 30 per cent of the members of the National Academy of Science and 30 per cent of the Nobel Prize recipients are from a Jewish background.”**

Fiest, himself brought up a Catholic, suggests this is because Jews have no hierarchy such as Catholicism has. Maybe having authorities that lay down the rules tends to stifle scientific curiosity. But atheists and agnostics have even less hierarchy and dogma, yet they are the tail rather than the head (Deut. 28:13, 44).

4 February p.16 - Blurry eyesight is the sharpest spider sense

Adanson’s house jumper is a spider that leaps on its prey, so it must be a good judge of distances. Yet part of its visual field is permanently out of focus. Its retinas have four layers of light sensitive cells. It is the second deepest layer, most sensitive to



Eyes of a jumping spider. The four layers of light sensitive cells have different sensitivities and only one - the correct one - produces the blurred image required to help gauge distance. Image: J. J. Harrison, Wikipedia, under GNU Free Documentation Licence Version 1.2.

green, that gives the blurred image, in contrast to the layer beneath that is sharply focussed. As the spider approaches its prey, the green image becomes more blurred, enabling it to judge the distance precisely. All jumping spiders probably share this range-finding ability. In any other group of animals, blurred vision would be an (in)distinct disadvantage.

4 February p.31 - Unorthodox thoughts

In this letter, reader Steve Wilson of London comments on an article from a previous issue:

“This tendency to unthinkingly defend any particular scientific orthodoxy not only fuels the belief that scientists are ‘no better’ than their religious fundamentalist opponents, it also tends to confirm maverick thinker Charles Fort’s assessment of scientific consensus as being no more than ‘the proper thing to wear, for a while.’”

With Darwin, the orthodoxy shifted from creation to evolution. As more and more evidence emerges, surely the pendulum must swing back.

4 February p.36 - On the silk road

This interesting article discusses the properties of silk, which is far superior to artificial fibre.

“Weight for weight, a typical spider silk is 20 times as strong as steel and four times as tough as Kevlar. It is also extremely flexible, stretching up to 50 per cent of its length without breaking. And it’s not just the silk’s physical properties that are impressive. It elicits no immune reaction in our bodies, it is biodegradable, and it is produced at low temperatures and pressures relative to other polymers.”

Silk from silkworms has a similar structure to that of spider silk and is much more

plentiful. Chinese cultivated silkworms, *Bombyx mori*, are fed on mulberry leaves for a month to become 10,000 times heavier by the time they are ready to pupate. **“The worms then anchor a thread onto a convenient mulberry branch and pull their heads back, reeling the silk from a tiny hole in their mouths. As they move their heads in a figure-of-eight configuration, they reel up to a kilometre of silk for their cocoon...*Bombyx mori* produces its silk from two glands that add up to a third of its body weight. The silk itself is a protein, made of a long chain of repeating amino acids. Inside the glands the silk has the consistency of jelly, but when it is time to make a cocoon, the jelly travels through specially shaped ducts that align the protein chains and strip away water molecules, converting it into solid fibres. These fibres are then covered in sericin, a protein glue that binds the strands coming from the two ducts before they leave the worm through a single ‘spigot’ in its head.”**

“Specially shaped ducts”, glue and a spigot, rather give the impression of intelligent design, don’t you agree?

A team has attempted to copy the system but this is far more energy-intensive and can’t match the real thing. The process destroys the structure and bonding of the protein chains that give natural silk its strength and toughness.

“Silk’s failure to produce an immune response, plus the fact that it biodegrades, means that it has a huge range of possible applications in the body.” It can be made into sheets of amazing transparency to make synthetic corneas, lenses, holograms and diffraction gratings. Stem cells can grow on a scaffold of silk to help mend broken bones.

11 February p.7 - Genes from a bone

“How’s this for impressive: a genome pieced together from a 30,000-year-old finger bone contains fewer errors than genomes generated using samples from living people.”

This finger points to the fact that mutations in humans increase over the generations, according to the second law of thermodynamics. ‘Change and decay in all around I see’. The estimate of the bone’s date is somewhat exaggerated.

11 February p.33 - Sceptical view

Here is a letter from Jeffrey Tapping, an Australian reader. We question whether Jeffrey is an evolutionist or, perish the thought, a creationist? You can take his carefully worded letter either way!



If the genome of the human hand has continually deteriorated over the generations, then how could it have arisen so perfectly in the distant past? This points to the finger of God. Image: S. Gjenero, www.rgbstock.com

“Why are scientists and teachers resistant to mentioning intelligent design and climate change denial in school science classes (21 January, p.4)? They are wonderful examples to demonstrate the difference between pseudo-science and real science. Properly equipped teachers will not have to take sides; the students will work it out for themselves. Problem solved.”

18 February p.3 - If morality is broken, we can fix it

The editor here sees a way around a disturbing subject:-

“Science has made great strides in explaining morality. No longer is it seen as something handed down from on high; instead it is an evolved system of enlightened self-interest. Altruism, for example, can benefit your genes and disgust can protect you from disease... Yet some value judgements are difficult to fit into this framework... Why is it wrong to create human embryos to cure diseases endured by millions?

The solution: - “We have an evolved tendency to make and obey arbitrary moral rules, probably as a way of promoting social cohesion. That picture opens the door to more progress. Yes, we follow rules that bring little benefit and can even be positively harmful. But the rules are not set in stone, so there’s nothing to stop us getting rid of those that don’t work and putting better ones in their place.”

Having rid ourselves of the moral obligation not to kill, we might just progress to addressing the economic problem of dragging out the painful lives of the disabled and elderly. Of course such arbitrary moral rules could change again as the evolutionists get old and sick!

18 February p.5 - Algae vs. evolution
“Whitefish species in 17 Swiss lakes began interbreeding in the mid-20th century, destroying biodiversity.” This was caused by algal blooms that depleted oxygen in the depths so that fish had to live cheek by jowl (or fin by tail) near the surface.

The different species are in fact variations of the created kinds, developed from the same stock of whitefish genes. This is nothing to do with evolution, any more than out-breeding between different breeds of dogs or different ethnic people.

18 February p.5 - Tiny traveller

Songbirds known as northern wheatears weigh just 25 grams (less than an ounce) yet make one of the longest migrations on record. From Alaska, they fly across the Bering Sea, then over Asia to sub-Saharan Africa, a distance of 9,000 miles.

18 February p.6 - Rocky start for life on Earth

The cytoplasm of biological cells is rich in potassium salts but poor in those of sodium. Sea water, on the other hand, is sodium rich and potassium poor. So maybe life started on land in thermal springs (as in the far east of Siberia) rather than in sea water.

“I do not think the oceans were a favourable environment for the origin of life – freshwater ponds seem more favourable,” says Nobel laureate Jack Szostak at Harvard University, a key player in the field.” It is admitted that “exactly where and how this happened is a mystery” but “this hasn’t stopped endless speculation”.

Should anyone in this mysterious origin-of-life field be described as a ‘key player’? Others claim “that early cells could pump out enough sodium from their cytoplasm to survive in sodium-rich environments,

so life might have emerged in salty pools or shorelines rather than in Siberian-style thermal springs.” Of course, the cells of these postulated pumps would have themselves been sodium rich, and had to operate to pump out their own cells in order to work! And could the first cells come equipped with the necessary complex pumps?

It seems that what we must on no account speculate about is that life was designed by an intelligent Creator.

18 February p.14 - Evolution’s third way down to prions

Prions are proteins that have mutated, such as “the rogue proteins behind variant CJD, the human form of mad cow disease.” This is here claimed to be a “form of near-instant evolution” that is not caused by mutations in DNA.

When yeast is grown under hostile conditions such as an oxygen depleted or abnormally acidic environment, the tiny fungus alters the way its DNA is read. A type of protein called Sup35 that usually plays an important quality control role in protein production is mutated into a prion. Consequently ribosomes that normally read only those sections of the DNA that make the required proteins instead read the entire sequence of DNA. Therefore they turn out hundreds of extra proteins from parts of DNA that in the presence of Sup35 are usually ignored.

It has now been found that what has been demonstrated in the lab can also occur in nature, and the extra proteins can be passed on to future generations of yeast.

But is this evolution? Having survived the stress of a hostile environment, the yeast is still yeast, and is less specific. The article does not say whether the mutated fungi are any more fit.

25 February p.6 - Planting seeds of climate doubt

Just like the teaching of evolution theory as fact in American schools, the teaching that global warming as progressing through human activity must not be questioned.

“What’s more, a separate informal poll of nearly 2000 Earth science teachers suggests that a significant proportion may prove receptive to contrarian material. Nearly half of respondents reported teaching ‘both sides’ of climate change science of their own volition.”

In 2007, a survey of 1372 climate scientists showed that 97 per cent of those who publish most frequently in the field agree that global warming is man-made. As with Creation Science, it seems that the contrary view doesn’t get past the peer reviewers. Despite scepticism expressed by both parents and students, teaching the controversy is regarded as a disturbing “meddling in education”.

NS’s anti-creationist editor comments on p.3 – **Don’t cloud young minds:** “The approach is strikingly similar to the ‘teach the controversy’ campaign mounted by the Seattle-based think tank the Discovery Institute. A decade ago, it designed lesson plans for teachers that focused on weaknesses in evolutionary theory and presented ‘intelligent design’ as a scientific alternative. ID proposes that facets of the living world were created by a supernatural ‘intelligent cause’.

Is it scientific to ignore and exclude the study of one side of an argument? Is it unreasonable to suppose that there are more things in heaven and earth than those you can measure with scientific apparatus? Education is ‘leading out’, not confining to a straitjacket.

3 March p.8 – Universe returns to its former self

On 1st October *New Scientist* reported on an experiment in the Alps where neutrinos seems to travel very slightly faster than light, contrary to Einstein’s rule. There is now a doubt that this result is reliable.

“The collaboration behind the original claims has discovered two flaws during the retesting of its experiment, called OPERA. These flaws did not definitely affect the results, but offer the most concrete basis yet for doubting that the neutrinos were actually speeding. This vastly weakens the original claims.”

3 March p.34 – The deep future

“Our species may very well endure for at least 100,000 years.” This prognosis is based upon the evolutionists’ belief in a deep past where fossil species are thought to have endured for millions of years. **“It seems there is plenty of time left on our clock. Plus, if you’ll excuse the blowing of our own trumpet, we are the cleverest of the mammals.”** Sadly for the fool (Psalm 14:1), it is the LORD’s trumpet they should be listening for.

There are a total of 16 pages of speculation on what life will be like then.

10 March p.3 – No more midlife crises?

The editor comments: **“Humans are the only animals to enjoy a lengthy post-reproductive, pre-decrepitude chapter in their lives. There is a case to be made for looking at middle age as a developmental phase that is just as remarkable as the teenage years.”**

The main article on p.48 refers to this stage in life as being at the pinnacle of evolution. However, plants and animals have fulfilled their purpose in life once they have reproduced their seed. Humans, on the other hand, were created to have fellowship



Unlike the fleeting adult life of a mayfly, humans generally attain a number of decades of adult life - plenty of time to recognise God's invisible qualities in the created world (Rom. 1: 20). Image: CSM.

with God. Here is yet another aspect of man's uniqueness.

10 March p.5 – Non-stick spiders

Flies stick to spider webs, yet spiders themselves don't. How come?

"They use three tricks: their legs are covered with hair to minimise contact with the sticky web, and coated in a chemical to reduce stickiness. Plus, they are masters at tip-toeing,"

Looks like they were well designed!

10 March p.12 – DNA from last of the great apes decoded

It is found that 70 per cent of genetic material in great apes is more closely related in chimps and humans than in gorillas and either chimps or humans. This is interpreted to mean that gorillas split off from primate evolution 10 m years ago, while chimps split from humans 7 m years in the past.

Yet the other 30 per cent of the gorillas' DNA is more closely related to chimps and to humans than chimp DNA is to humans. This is interpreted that gorillas continued to occasionally cross-breed with both chimps

and humans after they evolved into a separate species. Gorillas and humans have some 500 genes involved in hearing and brain development. Of course, we are only analysing genomes of gorillas, chimps and humans as they are today, not imagined millions of years in the past. So it is no more than an assumption that the genes have evolved. How can information in genes mutate into something smarter by chance? All that can be said with certainty from this study is that the apes and man have similar genes. This is because

they have similar body plans and similar functions (digestion, reproduction, respiration etc.) and utilise similar proteins. Man's DNA has much in common with that of the nematode worm, a millimetre-long earth-dwelling creature.

Clearly, there is much about genes and their management that we have yet to learn. By the time we have understood this, Darwinism should have been consigned to the history books.

10 March p.19 – Snakes on a sloping plane

The structure of snakes' scales stops them from sliding backwards. Interestingly, this cannot be the sole reason, because they are less prone to slip when awake than when sedated. **"Videos show that the snakes can control the angle of each scale to stick as firmly as possible to a surface."** So although consigned to go on its belly, the creature was well equipped by its Creator to do so.



Does hunting the Higgs boson have any more likelihood of success than hunting the Jabberwocky? The mythical particle is a postulate to shore-up a theory of the origin of the universe that looks increasingly shaky. Image: J. Tenniel, in the public domain.

17 March p.3 – Not the only particle in town

“Yes-no-yes-maybe. The Large Hadron Collider is back in business but the Higgs boson is proving as elusive as ever, teasing us with hints of its existence before fading away again. If you’ve got Higgs fatigue, join the club... By all means, hunt the Higgs – but not to the exclusion of other particles.”

Maybe there is no ‘god particle’.

17 March p.37 Cover story – God

“Can’t live with him, can’t live without him.” Over 12 pages, New Scientist concludes that religion is not something imposed by God, but something developed

by a process of evolution. It is ingrained in human nature, and will persist. Secularists must learn to live with the benefits to health and well-being of religion. Moreover, apparently the God hypothesis can be tested by science.

p.39 - Born believers

“...children under 10 tend to embrace creationist explanations of living things over evolutionary ones ... experiments with adults suggest we do not simply outgrow this attraction but that it must be forcibly tamped down through formal education.”

A chart shows Christianity has by far the most adherents (2.2 billion) while agnostic/atheist has about 750 million worldwide.

Unlike belief in Santa or the tooth fairy that children grow out of, adults **“sometimes reason their way to religious beliefs.”**

p.46 – The God Hypothesis

Here the writer, American professor Victor J. Stenger disputes the idea of religion and science as ‘non-overlapping magisteria’ (Gould), claiming that the existence, or not, of God is a question science can address. His books, *God and the folly of faith*, and *The incompatibility of science and religion*, gives a clue as to where he is coming from. According to a 1998 survey, 93 per cent of the membership of the US National Academy of Sciences does not believe in a personal god. Yet **“about the same percentage of all US citizens say they do believe in a personal god”**.

According to Stenger, experiments to test the efficacy of intercessory prayer were unconvincing. (You will know differently.) Attempts to show that the complexity found in biological systems is irreducible have failed. **“Life on Earth looks just as it should look if it arose by natural selection.”** (But a century of experiments

on bacteria failed to change them into anything else.)

Human behaviour throughout history does not suggest that religious folk are more moral. (Sadly true – but although man was created in the image of a just God, his disobedience in Eden and forever after has spoilt that image.)

"If God is the creator of the universe, then we should find evidence for that in astronomy and physics. We do not. The origin of our universe required no miracles. Furthermore, modern cosmology suggests an eternal 'multiverse' in which many other universes come and go." But surely Stenger is aware that the reason the multiverse was proposed was to get round the glaring evidence that the universe was created. The Anthropic Principle declares that it appears that the universe was made with man (Greek: *Anthropos*) in mind.

Tellingly, the **Editorial (p.3)** heads its comment on this cover story "**Know your enemy**".

24 March p.34 Riddles of our past

This 9-page cover story reports on "**Human Evolution - The ten biggest questions**"

"Line up the genomes of humans and chimps side by side and they differ by little more than 1 per cent. That may not seem like much, but it equates to more than 30 million point mutations. Around 80 per cent of our 30,000 genes are affected, and although most have just one or two changes, these can have dramatic effects." [Surely 30 million in 30,000 averages 1,000 per gene?] "**The protein made by the human gene *FOXP2*, which helps us to speak, differs from its chimp counterpart by just two amino acids, for example. And small changes in the *microcephalin* and *ASPM* genes may**

underlie big differences in brain size between humans and chimps.

"But protein evolution is only part of what makes us human. Also critical are changes in gene regulation – where and when genes are expressed...most of which have still to be uncovered." [These regulating sections between the protein-coding genes were originally called 'junk DNA' by the evolutionary experts!] Clearly, the 98.5 per cent of DNA shared by chimps and ourselves is an extremely misleading statistic.

"Copying errors mean that whole chunks of DNA have been accidentally deleted. Other chunks find themselves in new locations." Not at all! This statement could only be true if evolution is a fact. Such assumptions of jumping genes cannot be ratified since we cannot go back in history to check changes. The article sports a time-



The skin of man is markedly different from apes, such as this chimpanzee. What evolutionary benefit could there be in losing fur? If it was a benefit, why have the various species of apes and monkeys not also developed in this way? The evidence points rather to man's unique design.
Image: H. Berkovich, www.rgbstock.com.

line from 8 million years in the past through to the present claiming to show stages such as when australopithecines appear and when pubic lice evolved following our loss of fur coats.

Australopithecines are extinct apes, walking on their knuckles. Bipedalism has many advantages, but the transition would require many anatomical changes from ear labyrinth balance to the angle of the tibia, to the foot structure. Even if these changes were possible, the intermediate forms would be “**slow, clumsy and unstable**”. Yet we learn here that this “**is when the greatest anatomical changes took place, with shoulders pulled back, legs lengthened and a pelvis adapted to life on two legs.**” And all this without recourse to cosmetic surgery!

One question posed is “**why was technological development so slow?**” The real answer is that it wasn’t. The millions of years are the invention of men like Hutton and Lyell. Apes have never got beyond low cunning, while the first people were experts in metalwork and music making (Gen. 4).

“**When did language evolve?**

Without language we would struggle to exchange ideas or influence other people’s behaviour. Human society as we know it could not exist. The origin of this singular skill was a turning point in our history, yet the timing is extremely difficult to pin down.

“**Neanderthals ... had the neural connections to the tongue, diaphragm and chest muscles necessary to articulate sounds and control breathing for speech. Evidence comes from the size of holes in the skull and vertebrae through which the nerves serving these areas pass. What’s more, Neanderthals shared the human variant of the *FOXP2* gene,**

“**crucial for forming the complex motor memories involved in speech.”**

Clearly, Neanderthals were fully human. Their babies must have had the high-position hyoid bone as found in chimps, that allowed them to swallow without choking, but which later, unlike with chimps, dropped to a lower position to permit them to begin to speak.

“**Dunbar suggests that hominin voices might have evolved to sing by the campfire.**” This is the Oxford don who, some years ago, suggested that speech evolved to allow women to gossip!

In fact, the first man Adam walked and talked with his Creator in the Garden of Eden and later wrote about it (Gen. 5:1).

“**Why did we lose our fur?**

Mammals expend huge amounts of energy just keeping warm. Why would we forgo that benefit?” Especially with an ice age following the Flood of Noah. The article dismisses the theory that Homo lost his fur and developed sub-cutaneous lard in order to evolve in water. That idea lacks fossil evidence. Other animals on the savannah have hung on to their fur coats. We are told that sexual selection lent a hand. Yet not everyone is impressed by goose pimples. Survival of the fittest this is not.

“**Are there any other hominins left?**”

If we evolved from apes, should we expect to find cousins such as the legendary Bigfoot, Yeti or Yowie. Someone from the University of Edmonton, Canada “**recently analysed a tuft of hair from a supposed Bigfoot to find that it came from a bison.**” Personally I don’t find that surprising. My mum used to cut my hair round a bison.

“**We have long struggled to explain how intelligence evolved.**” But what makes mankind unique among all other creatures is not just our superior intelligence. We were created in the image of God. And the

good news is that for the Christian our destiny is to be conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29). ‘Beloved, now are we the sons of God ... but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.’

31 March p.17 – Don’t rain on my faint sun paradox

“Around 2.7 billion years ago, a volcanic eruption left what is now South Africa blanketed in soft ash. Before it hardened into rock, light rain left imprints in the surface.” From the depth of the rain pits, one estimates the speed of the fall of the raindrops and thence the density of the air at the time. **“An analysis of a fossilised rain shower suggests air density on early Earth was broadly similar to today’s – making it difficult to explain why Earth was warmer than it is now when the sun shone less brightly.”**

Air density that was much like nowadays suggests that this all happened after the Flood. (Waters above the firmament gave increased pre-flood air pressure.) Also, such delicate impressions would not have survived a world-wide inundation. So we are looking at only thousands of years ago at most. The sun’s brightness would also have been much the same then as it is today. The preservation of these ancient impressions means they were covered rapidly. It is the sudden geological activities that confirm the short time-scale of geological observations. Evolution is thought to take millions of years.

Feathers or not

Earlier this year the BBC News website (<http://goo.gl/SsmU9>, accessed 22 January) reported on new research into the

structure of barn owl feathers. Barn owls hunt stealthily in near darkness for their prey of rodents such as voles and mice. It is essential therefore that the owl’s flight is noiseless, so that it can use mainly auditory cues to locate its prey and so that the prey is not alerted to its presence as it approaches.

Dr Thomas Bachmann, of the Technical University Darmstadt in Germany, found that the feathers of the barn owl were adapted to facilitate noiseless flight in a number of different ways. Firstly, the plumage of the bird is particularly soft and dense, muffling any sounds it makes. The wing feathers also have a very high camber, helping make possible flight that is slow and hence quieter. The edges of each wing are also extremely fine, reducing any noise from air turbulence during flight, and the friction noise between single feathers is reduced by their velvety surface. Such a combination of features speaks strongly of intelligent design.

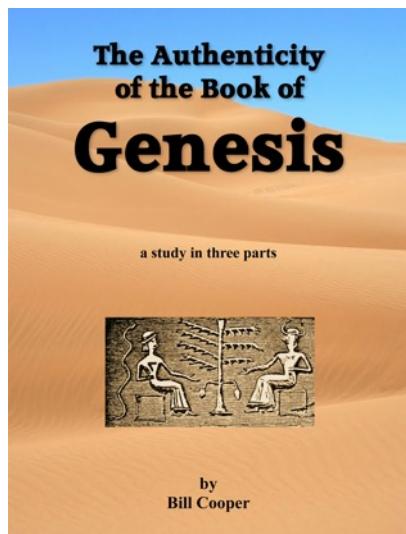
Contrast this with the more recent news report (<http://goo.gl/ua9Hy>, accessed 06 April) of the discovery of fossils of a new species of tyrannosaur called *Yutyrannus* from China. Trumpeted with the title “T. rex relative is biggest ever feathered animal” the article goes on to claim that “the creature’s extensive plumage... provides direct evidence for the existence of giant feathered dinosaurs”! However, a careful reading of the text of the article shows that these so-called feathers could hardly be less like the genuine feathers of birds such as the barn owl. The “feathers” are simply filaments, and might be nothing more than the remains of collagen fibres. Yet these remains are shoe-horned into the evolutionary paradigm. Accompanying the article is an artist’s illustration of the dinosaur that even takes the liberty of

including longer filaments on the forelimbs, insinuating the impression that these are gradually developing wing feathers, even though no evidence whatsoever is presented to justify this.

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